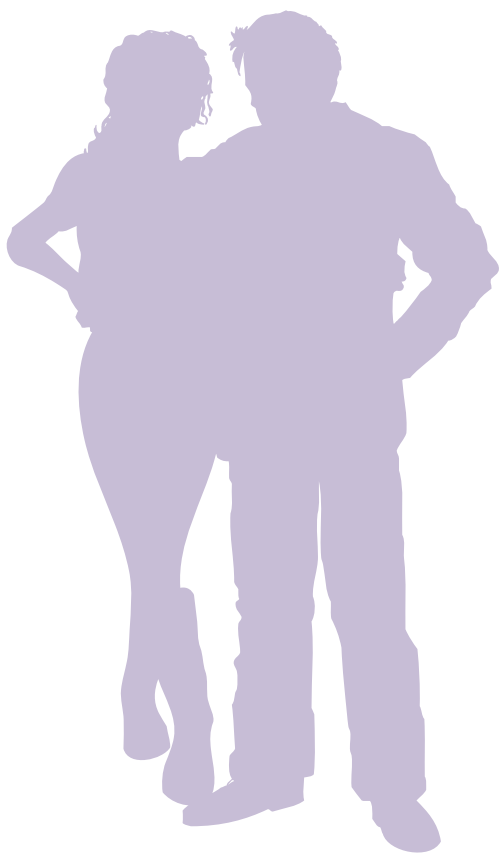


# CHLAMYDIA



**Answers to your questions  
about Chlamydia  
and how it is treated**



## What is chlamydia?

Chlamydia is a very common STD. About one million Americans get chlamydia each year. Most people who have chlamydia don't know they have it because they don't have symptoms. This can be serious for a woman because hidden problems can happen before she ever knows there is an infection.

Anyone who has sex can be infected with chlamydia. It can be spread through vaginal, oral or anal sex. The more sex partners a person has, the more the risk of infection. Teenage girls and young women are at much higher risk for getting chlamydia because the opening to the uterus (cervix) is not fully developed. Men can also get chlamydia even if they are only having sex with other men.

Chlamydia can be passed from a pregnant woman to her baby and can also cause premature birth.

## What about chlamydia and PID?

In women, chlamydia can cause Pelvic Inflammatory Disease (PID). PID, a common and serious complication, is an infection of the womb and fallopian tubes. PID can hurt a woman's ability to have children by causing infertility. It can also lead to an ectopic pregnancy. Ectopic pregnancy happens when a fertilized egg starts to grow in the fallopian tube and can be quite dangerous.

If a woman gets chlamydia more than once, it adds to the chance that she will have serious problems like PID.

## What are the signs and symptoms?

Chlamydia is known as a “silent” disease. About 75% of women and about half of men have no symptoms. If there are symptoms, they usually appear 1 to 3 weeks after sex.

Women might have vaginal discharge or a burning feeling when they urinate (pee).

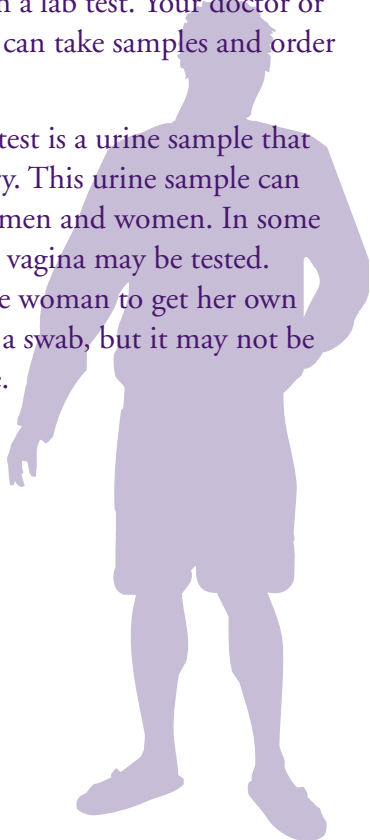
Men might have oozing from their penis or a burning feeling when urinating. Men might also have itching around the opening of the penis. Pain and swelling in the testicles can happen but is rare.

A woman with PID may have mild symptoms or no symptoms at all, even though serious damage is being done. If a woman has symptoms, she may have low belly pain that looks like other problems. Other signs include fever or vaginal discharge that has a bad odor. It may be painful to have sex or urinate and there may be bleeding between periods.

## How is chlamydia tested?

Because chlamydia can sometimes look like other STDs, the best way to find out if you have chlamydia is through a lab test. Your doctor or health care provider can take samples and order the tests.

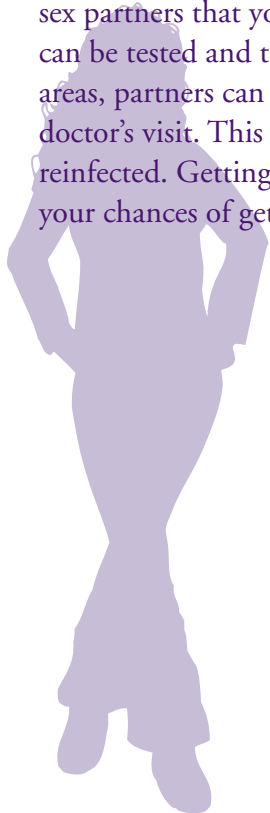
The most common test is a urine sample that is sent to a laboratory. This urine sample can be taken from both men and women. In some cases, fluid from the vagina may be tested. A new test allows the woman to get her own vaginal sample with a swab, but it may not be available everywhere.



## How is chlamydia treated?

If you have chlamydia, your doctor will give you a prescription for an antibiotic. Some are taken for only one day, others for as long as 10 days. Be sure to tell your doctor if you are pregnant, because he or she might give you a different medicine.

Take all of your medicine, even if you start to feel better. If your symptoms do not go away in 1 or 2 weeks, go back to your doctor. Many doctors will want to do another test after you finish your medicine. Don't have sex until your treatment is finished and successful. Tell your sex partners that you have chlamydia so they can be tested and treated if needed. In some areas, partners can get free treatment without a doctor's visit. This will help keep you from being reinfected. Getting chlamydia again can increase your chances of getting PID if you are a woman.



## How can chlamydia be prevented?

**Don't have sex.** Abstinence is the surest way to avoid getting chlamydia.

**Be faithful.** Have sex with only one other person whom you trust. Sexual fidelity with someone who is not infected means that you won't get chlamydia from them and, if you're not infected, they won't get it from you.

**Use condoms.** They aren't 100% effective, but if you choose to have sex, latex condoms can be good protection against chlamydia. Learn how to use condoms correctly and use a new one every time you have sex.

**Don't have sex** while you're being treated for chlamydia.

**Your partner(s)** should be tested and treated if needed.

**Don't mix drugs and alcohol with sex.** Getting drunk or high can affect your ability to make smart decisions about sex.

**Have fewer partners.** The more people you have sex with, the greater your chances of getting chlamydia.

If you have questions or need more information, call your doctor, local health department or clinic.

Or call the  
**STD National Hotline**  
**1-800-227-8922**



For persons with disabilities, this document is available on request in other formats. To submit a request, please call 1-800-525-0127 (TDD/TTY 1-800-833-6388).



DOH 347-005 June 2008



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